

REGULAR MEETING – MANSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
March 22, 2010

Mayor Elizabeth Paterson called the regular meeting of the Mansfield Town Council to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Audrey P. Beck Building.

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Haddad, Keane, Kochenburger, Moran, Paterson, Paulhus, Ryan
Excused: Lindsey, Schaefer

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Paulhus moved and Mr. Ryan seconded to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2010 meeting as corrected. Motion passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC HEARING

1. Proposed Open Space Acquisition – Ossen/McCoy Property, Birchwood Heights

Director of Planning Gregory Padick described the location and benefits of the parcel under consideration noting the purchase would be consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development and is supported by the Open Space Preservation Committee.

David Freudmann, Eastwood Road, spoke in support of the purchase of the Ossen/McCoy property and suggested any trail be placed on the eastern property line so the property could possibly be sold for a profit in the future. (Statement attached)

Mike Sikoski, Wildwood Road, spoke in support of the purchase and asked for additional details on the financial impact of open space parcels.

The public hearing was closed at 7:45 p.m.

IV. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

Sharry Goldman, Browns Road, presented information on research she has conducted regarding volunteer driver programs for seniors. (Statement attached).

Jane Blanshard, Sycamore Drive, requested information regarding the weekly senior WRTD bus trip be widely advertised.

Ric Hossack, Middle Turnpike, restated the questions he asked at the February 8, 2010 meeting and asked for answers. Mr. Hossack questioned why an ambulance was in front of the Red Rock Café at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday night and questioned the purchases made with the JAG Recovery Grant.

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David Freudmann, Eastwood Road, expressed his opposition to the proposed Off Street Parking on Residential Property Ordinance. (Statement attached)

Betty Wassmundt, Old Turnpike Road, suggested a delay in any implementation of a Parking Code and a review of the Housing Code. Ms. Wassmundt also questioned the increase in the property tax since 2001. (Statement attached)

Howard Raphaelson, Timber Drive, commented that his experience with Mansfield Town staff has been very positive and asked that his compliment be passed on to the department heads in Town.

Mike Sikoski, Wildwood Road, inquired why the question regarding the meeting on collective bargaining was answered by the Town Attorney and not just directed to the Freedom of Information Commission.

V. REPORT OF TOWN MANAGER

Report attached.

Town Manager Matthew Hart remarked on the recent passing of Jody Newmyer, calling her a truly wonderful woman who contributed to the Town of Mansfield in many ways. A memorial service will be held on March 27th at 11:00 a.m. at Saint Paul's Episcopal Church.

The Town Manager will ask Chief Dagon about the ambulance reportedly parked in front of the Red Rock Café and thanked Jim Greene for his suggestion to embed links in his report to items in the packet. Mr. Hart will look into Ms. Goldman's claim that the Town had a dedicated van for seniors in 2007 and explained that a number of small energy inefficient refrigerators were exchanged for a larger more efficient model.

The Town Manager announced that Director of Planning Gregory Padick and Zoning Enforcement Officer Curt Hirsch were honored with lifetime achievement awards from the Connecticut Federation of Planning and Zoning Agencies.

VI. REPORTS AND COMMENTS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor Paterson urged all citizens to fill out their census forms. Ms. Paterson extended her condolences to the Newmyer family noting that Jody served on an early Town Council and was a wonderful friend, mentor and member of the community.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

2. Proposed Open Space Acquisition – Ossen/McCoy Property, Birchwood Heights

Mr. Haddad moved and Mr. Paulhus seconded, effective March 22, 2010, to authorize the Town Manager to finalize and to execute the purchase of the .9-acre property known as the Ossen/McCoy property.

Motion passed unanimously.

3. Community/Campus Relations

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The Town Manager reported the Town/University Committee met and discussed the Storrs Road Improvement Project. He also noted that he and the Mayor met with the representatives of the group of UConn students who have proposed an alternate plan for Spring Weekend. Mr. Hart commended the overall goals and objectives of the group but commented there were a number of issues, including preparation time limits and the lack of a plan to deal with underage drinkers, which could be problematic. The Mayor and the Town Manager will continue to work with the group. Council members discussed the Town's responsibility to address health and safety issues at Spring Weekend and the ability of the Town to manage liability.

4. Community Water and Wastewater Issues

The Four Corners Water and Sewer Advisory Committee met with members of environmental advocacy groups to discuss the project. Town Manager Matt Hart reported early indications from an analysis of the local aquifer in the Four Corners area are hopeful.

5. Ordinance Regarding Off Street Parking on Residential Property

Mr. Kochenburger reported on the efforts of the Ordinance Development and Review Subcommittee to review and modify the proposed ordinance. Subcommittee members stated the purpose of the ordinance is to target the specific safety issues surrounding parking and noted that changes have been made that will assist property owners with the required plans. Members reiterated that this proposal is not an attempt to regulate occasional parties and landowners like all other businesses provide a service and must comply with certain regulations.

Mr. Paulhus moved and Mr. Kochenburger seconded to schedule a public hearing for 7:30 PM at the Town Council's regular meeting on April 26, 2010, regarding a proposed ordinance titled "An Ordinance Regarding Off Street Parking on Residential Rental Property."

Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

6. Last Green Valley Grant Program – Moss Sanctuary Public Accessibility and Awareness

Mr. Haddad moved and Mr. Paulhus seconded, effective March 22, 2010, to authorize staff to seek funds in the amount of \$13,150 from the Last Green Valley to improve public accessibility and awareness of the Moss Sanctuary.

Motion passed unanimously.

7. Presentation of Town Manager's FY 2010/11 Proposed Budget

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Town Manager Matt Hart thanked the budget team for their work and presented an overview of his 2010/11 budget. The approach used in his budget is to maintain core services and programs, control and reduce expenditures where feasible without compromising core services, advance key council goals and objectives, and to allocate additional General Fund monies for capital projects.

Mr. Hart reviewed the potential impact on the taxpayer noting that the mill rate would decrease from 25.71 to 25.62 mills and presented a sample tax impact on a median home in Town. Mr. Haddad requested an analysis on how the revaluation process affects various categories of housing in Town. (Powerpoint attached)

IX. QUARTERLY REPORT

Distributed

X. DEPARTMENTAL AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

No comments

XI. REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Mr. Haddad reported the Personnel Committee is continuing to review the Ethics Ordinance.

Ms. Moran moved to appoint the following recommendations of the Committee on Committees to the Mansfield Advocates for Children: Lisa Dahn, Sonya Conrad, Patricia Braithwaite, Lisa Holle, Anne Bladen, Susan Daley and Judith Stoughton.

Motion to approve the recommendations passed unanimously.

Ms. Moran moved to appoint Ron Schurin to the Communication Advisory Committee.

Motion to approve the nomination passed unanimously.

Ms. Moran distributed a draft announcement identifying committee openings and asked for Council approval to disseminate it. By consensus the Council agreed.

XII. PETITIONS, REQUEST AND COMMUNICATIONS

8. U. Palaniswamy re: Housing Code

9. J. Yorks re: Thank you

10. M. Hart re: Waiver of Electricity Usage Costs

11. D. O'Brien re: Strategy or Negotiations re: Collective Bargaining

12. School Building Committee Report – March 2010

13. CCM Municipal Action Day

14. Connecticut Clean Energy Fund re: Clean Energy Communities Program

15. Chronicle "Letter to the Editor" - 03-03-10

16. Chronicle "Reval impacts Mansfield grand list" – 03-08-10

17. Chronicle "Council Oks bikeway, road paving projects" – 03-10-10

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XIII. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

David Freudmann, Eastwood Road, spoke in opposition to the parking ordinance

Betty Wassmundt, Old Turnpike Road, commented on the need for Council to provide supporting data for their views, the vending machines and the wellness program and fiduciary oversight.

XIV. FUTURE AGENDAS

No items added

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Ryan moved and Mr. Paulhus seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 p.m.

Elizabeth Paterson, Mayor

Mary Stanton, Town Clerk

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